

Washington, D.C. - {Members of the Illinois' Congressional delegation joined Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) today to meet with Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano regarding the rail agency's objections to Canadian National (CN) Railway's proposed purchase of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad (EJ&E).

Bean, along with Congressman Don Manzullo (IL-16), Congresswoman Judy Biggert (IL-13), and Congressman Bill Foster (IL-14), met with Pagano to discuss in detail Metra's concerns with the proposed transaction and to coordinate the delegation's ongoing response. Metra, which provides 83 million rides to suburban and city residents each year, has previously stated that it is opposed to the proposal due to the lack of commitments from CN about sharing track rights. The proposal threatens continuation of current operations and construction of the long-awaited suburb-to-suburb Metra STAR Line.

"Our suburban delegation wants to ensure that suburban transit is not left behind in consideration of this transaction before the Surface Transportation Board," Bean said. "The potential devastating impact on commuter rail operations is just one of many reasons we've been working against this sale."

"Thousands of the people I represent in McHenry County ride Metra's Northwest Line each day and would be affected by the CN purchase of the EJ&E line," Manzullo said. "I thank Mr. Pagano for coming to Washington to brief Members of Congress about the challenges a CN purchase would place on current Metra routes as well as the future STAR line, which would give McHenry County residents a passenger rail connection to many more destinations in the collar counties as well as a direct connection to O'Hare Airport. With gas prices at record levels, we need to do everything we can to encourage more mass transit opportunities like the STAR line, and that's another reason why more freight trains on the EJ&E line are a bad idea."

"The original spoke-and-wheel mass transit model no longer serves suburban communities the way its planners envisioned," Biggert said. "Affordable and convenient public transit between suburban communities is crucial to reducing congestion and promoting long-term economic growth. We cannot allow CN's plans to buy the EJ&E jeopardize Metra's ability to complete the STAR line and expand commuter rail service between Chicago's suburbs and O'Hare airport."

"My constituents have been overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed CN takeover, and I intend

to make their voices heard,” Foster said. “I am hopeful that by working in a bipartisan manner with Reps. Bean, Biggert and Manzullo, we will be able to work with CN and EJ&E to find a common-sense solution that is in the best interests of the people we represent.”

CN’s proposal is currently before the Surface Transportation Board (STB), which has final authority to approve or disapprove the sale.

Along with threats to suburban rail, the proposal would result in up to a 400 percent increase in rail traffic along the EJ&E line, cutting through many suburban communities. The increase will a significant negative impact on traffic congestion along major roads, public safety, quality of life, environmental quality, and local economies.

}

###